

# THE WORKPLACE READINESS CREDENTIAL

## An Economic Development Tool



# “Credential” Defined

For the purposes of our group (Cape Girardeau CTC, Workforce Investment Board of Southeast Missouri, Cape Girardeau Chamber of Commerce and local employers), a **Workplace Credential** is defined as a certificate or portfolio awarded to an individual that contains the following:

- *Identified specific competencies, tasks or skills attained by the participant for entry level employment*





# “Credential” Defined

*These competencies, tasks or skills:*

- Have been identified by local input
- Will be reviewed on a periodic basis
- Have a prescribed curriculum which has been developed and implemented and will support instruction for the competencies, tasks or skills
- Have defined methods of measuring competencies through valid and reliable testing, or demonstration of competence through other methods previously identified

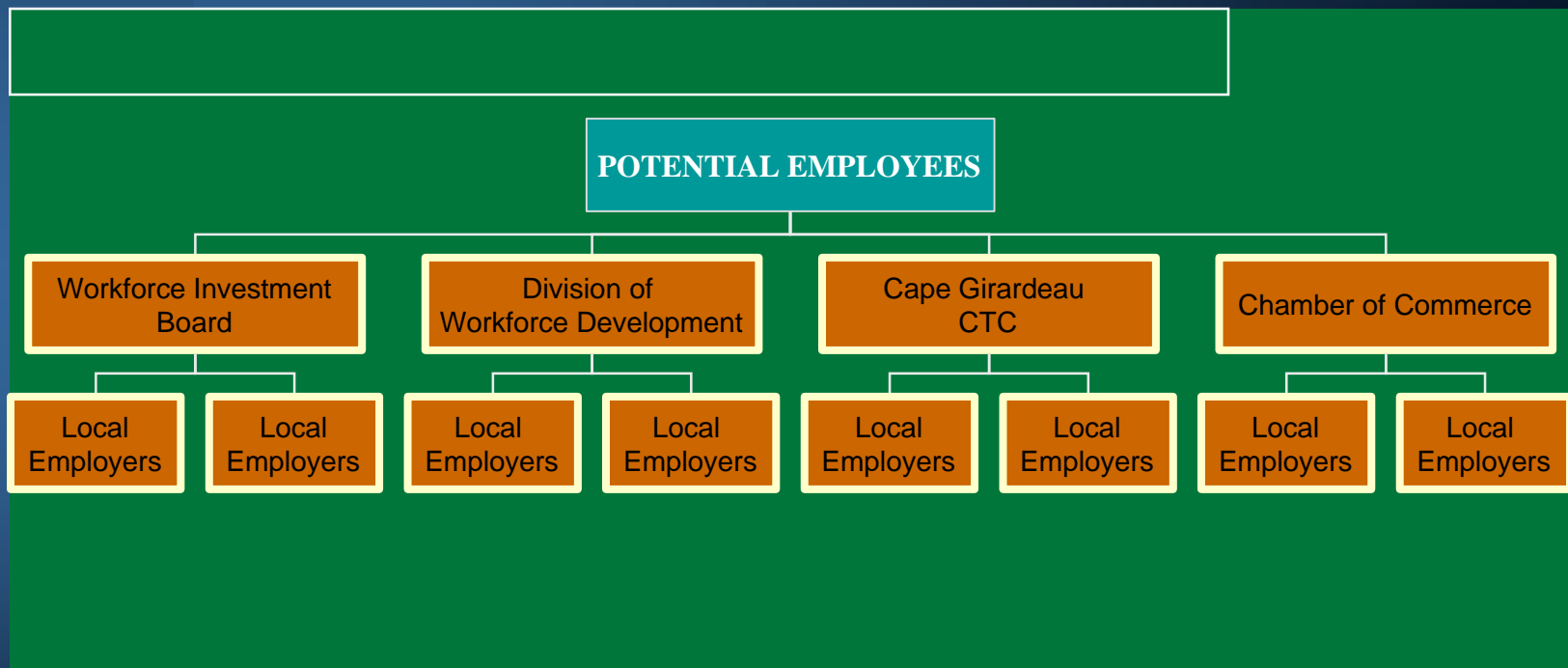


# Development & Endorsement of the Credential

- The Cape Girardeau Career Center, the local Workforce Investment Board, local employers, Cape Girardeau Chamber of Commerce, and other agencies worked collaboratively to develop the core skill sets and skill levels required to earn this credential.
- Endorsement of this credential by these groups has increased the potential widespread use and acceptance of the credential in the employment community.



# Area Workforce Development





# Developmental Stage

- Fall 2000-Workplace Readiness  
Request Businesses need work-ready employees to be able to compete in today's global market.
- Spring 2001-Solutions Mapping
  - Identify pre-employment skills
  - Define academic and technical skill needed
  - Identify interpersonal skills needed



# Developmental Stage

- December 2001-Collaboration with WIB
  - WIB support
  - Local WIA providers support
  - Survey developed for local business input
- Spring 2002-Local Survey & Symposium
  - Employers had input in the development of this credential



# Developmental Stage

- Summer 2002-Curriculum Developed
  - CTC developed curriculum based on local input
  - WPRC Instructor hired
- Fall 2002-DOL Grant Approved through Southeast MO State University School of Polytechnic Studies
- Fall 2003-SEMO University grant approved for 2 years



# Workplace Readiness Characteristics/Local Rankings

1. Work Ethic
2. Dependability
3. Teamwork
4. Honesty
5. Willingness to Learn
6. Communication Skills
7. Flexibility
8. Problem Solving
9. Number Functions
10. Respect for Self & Others
11. Appropriate Education & Experience



# The Goals

- Promote regional economic growth
- Develop the local workforce into a ready supply of qualified employees for current and potential employers.
- Assist employers and potential employees to have a clearly defined sense of workplace skills needed to maintain efficiency and effectiveness on a variety of jobs.
- Move the Cape Girardeau area forward toward becoming a workplace ready community with employers giving precedence to applicants with the local “credential”



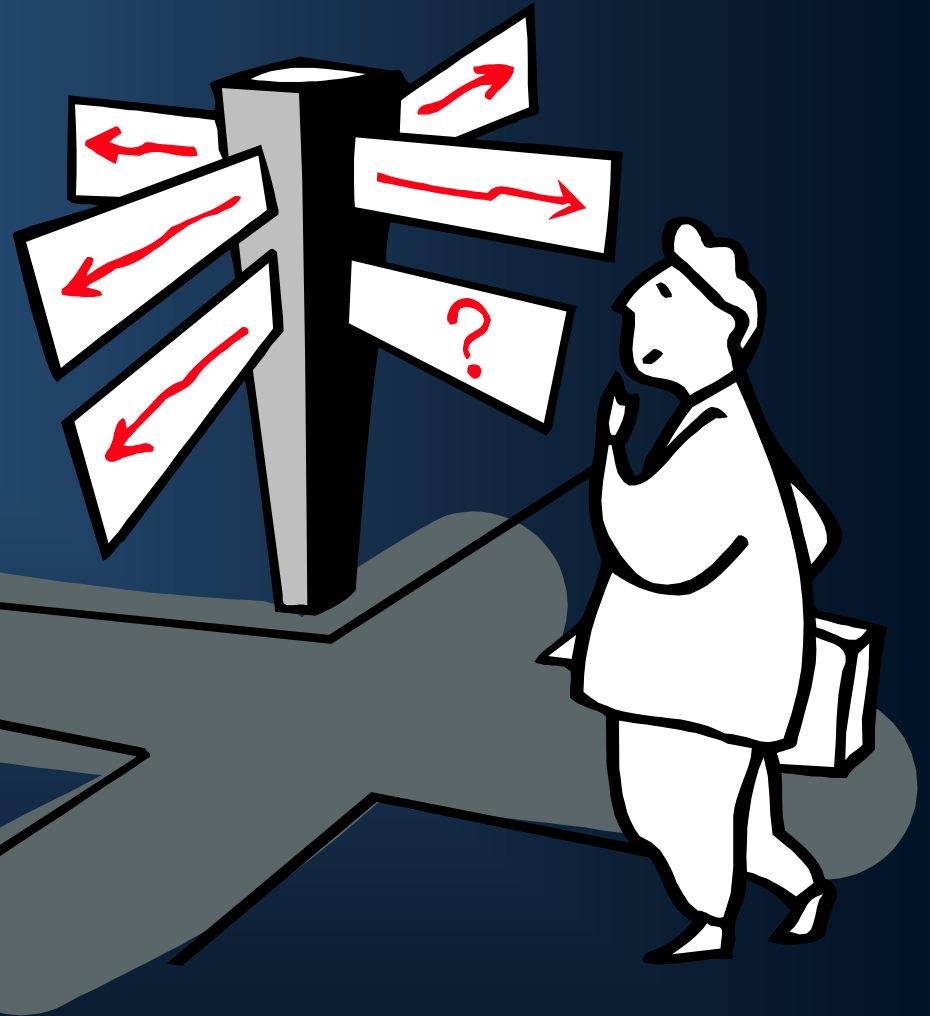


# G.E.D. & Workplace Readiness Credential

- Many employers understand/approve the standards identified for the WPR Credential.
- The Workplace Credential demonstrates that an individual meets the needs of local employers.
- The credential is not a substitute or replacement for the G.E.D., but an alternative for employers to use in identifying work ready individuals with entry-level skills.
- Employees are encouraged to continue work toward their G.E.D.



# Questions?





# Spring 2002 Surveys and Symposium

Surveys were completed by:

- Cape Area Personnel Association members.
- SEMO Industrial Regional Training Group
- Employers and Advisory Committees at an Assoc. for Career & Tech. Educ. Breakfast
- A random group of local employers in 5 clusters: Hospitality Services, Medical Services Providers, Administrative Services, Manufacturing Companies and Retail Businesses.



# Survey Results

Which of the following characteristics/behaviors would keep a person from being hired by your organization?

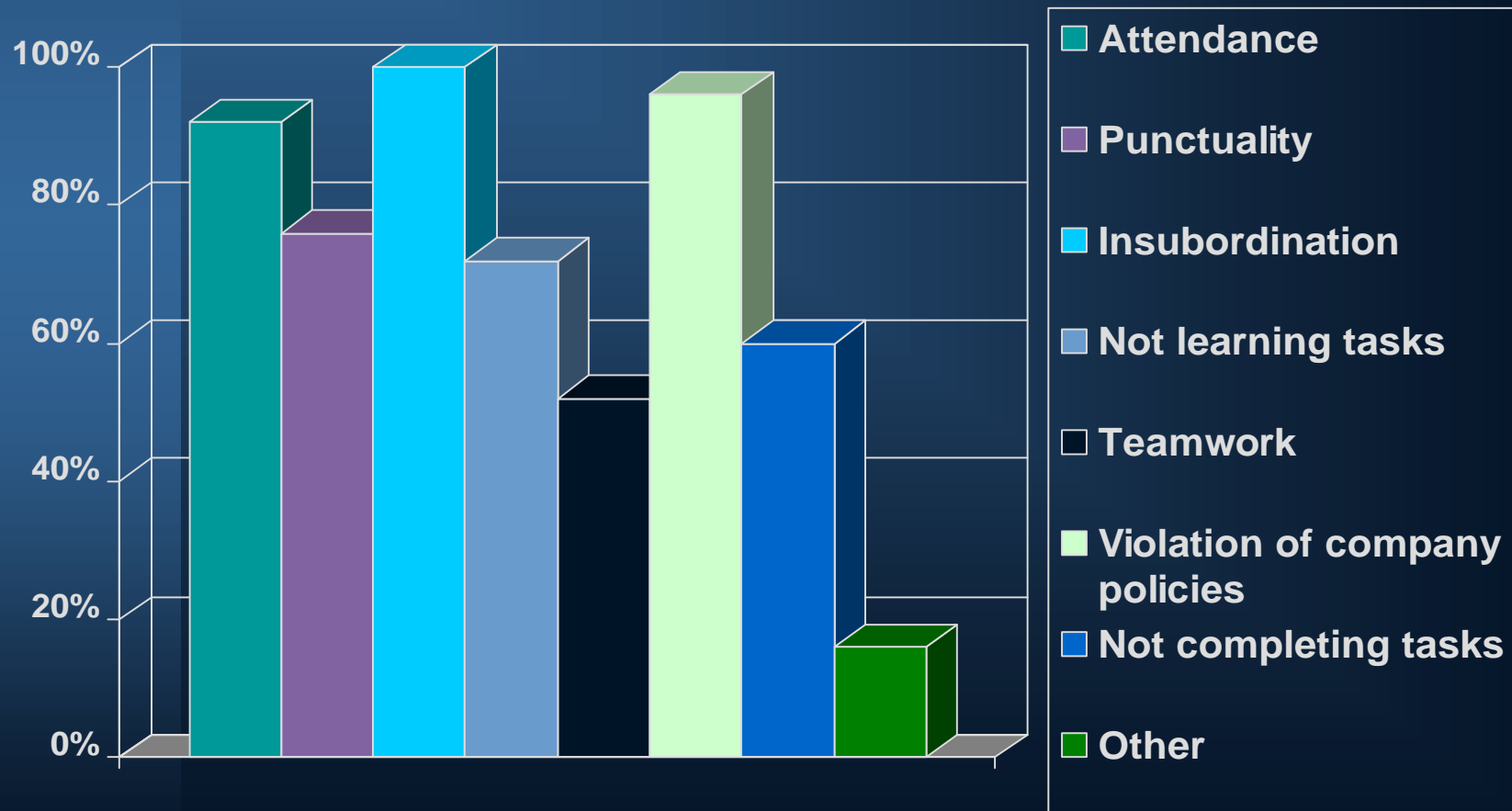
- Lack of communication skills-**88%**
- Interview-**76%**
- Incorrect application info.-**68%**
- Punctuality-**64%**
- Lack of technical skills-**60%**
- Education/Training-**56%**
- Inappropriate dress-**56%**





# Survey Results

Which characteristics/ behaviors would result in termination of employment within the probationary period?





# Survey Results

Which skills/habits would be required for a new employee to retain a job with your company and be efficient and effective on the job?



- Verbal skills-**88%**
- Interpersonal skills-**84%**
- Reading skills-**72%**
- Basic computer skills-**72%**
- Telephone skills-**60%**
- Written skills-**60%**
- Math skills-**52%**
- Basic office equip. skills-**44%**
- Depends on the job-**16%**



# All Day Symposium

## March 8, 2002

- Approximately 70 individuals volunteered from business, education and agencies.
- Teams were divided up into: standards, promotions, measurements, core skills, administrative, hospitality and retail services, manufacturing technology and medical services .
- Targeted outcomes/responsibilities were provided to Team Leaders who made presentations at the end of the day. Results were compiled and mailed to participants.
- Team Leader's met again six weeks later to review results & develop further plans.



# Symposium Results

## “Most Important Information”

- **Standards:** A “Credential” should indicate that the skills of the bearer should be “higher” than for someone off the street.
- **Promotions:** Get as many “endorsements” as soon as possible and keep “marketing” tools as low in cost as possible making sure they still look good.
- **Measurements:** Determine benefits to employers after six months and check on difference in employee productivity with and without credential.





# Symposium Results

## “Most Important Information”

- **Core Skills: “Credential Certification”** someone who has at least been through the minimum of resumes, applications and interview modules.
- **Administrative Services:** Special emphasis on “observation”. Employers should help with shadowing experiences.
- **Hospitality Services:** Focused on Basic Skills, Reading, and Locating Information at Level 3, Teamwork at Level 4. Recommend “out of class” assignments, training in customer service, personal safety, Serv-Safe training and strong recommendation for shadowing experience.



# WPRC Registration System

- Referrals come from many sources, i.e. drop in at the CTC, the local WIB subcontractors, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, word of mouth, phone calls.
- All applicants must make a \$25.00 deposit (as of 07/1/04).
- All applicants must complete a pre-assessment.
- As this process is completed, a tracking form is started.



# Pre-assessment Process

- Applicant makes deposit and picks up packet.
- Applicant completes the packet and returns to the Assessment Center before, or at the time of, the pre-assessment.
- Pre-assessment NOT a “screening out” process but a tool for greater assurance of success in the WPRC and also the short-term training.
- Pre-assessment connects participants to additional resources if necessary to eliminate barriers to success.



# Pre-assessment Activities

- Math and Reading ability screenings (TABE)
- Soft skills assessment – with PEWM Certificate
- Interests (KUDER)
- Work Values (COPES)
- Learning Styles (CITE)
- Personal Interview
- Results reviewed with short/long term training or employment possibilities discussed.



# Pre-assessment Results

- **TABE** – Looking for 8.0 grade level in both reading and math (life skills level)
- **PEWM** – 13 categories (pale yellow handout)
- **KUDER** – highest interests match training or employment options
- **COPEs** – work values categories match interests (i.e. science, business, technology, social, art)
- **LEARNING STYLES** – watch for match with career choice, i.e. not visual language with court recorder.



# From Pre-Assessment to Workplace Readiness Class

- Tracking Form is completed with notes on possible training/employment options. (dark green handout)
- Copies of WPRC applicants tracking forms are given to WPRC Instructor.
- Some applicants encouraged to complete math/ reading reviews during two weeks of WPRC.
- Applicants may retake portions of PEWM test in order to obtain a certificate.



# Questions?





# Employer Concerns

“Don’t worry so much about the technical skills. We need you to teach them how to show up on time, how to work in teams, and how to take supervision.”





# **“Main” Employer Concerns**

## **Application Mistakes**

- **Unanswered Questions**
- **Spelling Errors**
- **Penmanship**



# Actual Phrases Found On Resumes

- “I have lurnt Word Perfect 6.0 computor and spreadsheet pprograms.”
- “Wholly responsible for two (2) failed financial institutions.”
- “The company made me a scapegoat, just like my three previous employers.
- “Am a perfectionist and rarely if if ever forget details.”



# Actual Phrases Found on Resumes

- “It’s best for employers that I not work with people.”
- “Reason for leaving last job: maturity leave.”
- “Finished eighth in my class of ten.”
- “Received a plague for Salesperson of the Year.”
- “Instrumental in ruining entire operation for a Midwest chain store.”



# Interview Blunders

- Being late for the interview
- Bringing family members (children)
- Asking “How long will this take?”
- Bringing food to the interview
- Not groomed/dressed appropriately
- Cell phones
- Smelling of alcohol
- Poor body language



# Because of These Concerns

Employers now want entry-level employees to not only have those acceptable skills, such as: Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, but “**HIGHER SKILLS**” - what many call “**SOFT SKILLS.**”



# Soft Skills

- Work Ethics
- Courtesy
- Teamwork
- Self-Discipline and Self-Confidence
- Personal Appearance
- Language Proficiency



# Course Objectives/ Essential Skills

- Working Safely
- Using the Internet for Job Search
- Math and Measurement Skills
- Taxes and Taxation
- Job Shadowing Related to Short Term Training



# Course Objectives/ Essential Skills

- Punctuality and Regular Attendance
- Projecting a Professional Impression
- Getting Along with Co-Workers
- Making Decisions and Problem Solving
- Working as a “Team Player”
- Acceptable Workplace Habits
- Developing Leadership Skills
- Proper Telephone Skills





# Course Objectives/ Essential Skills

- **Accepting responsibility for actions**
- **Work Ethics**
- **Budgeting, Saving, & Investing Money**
- **Customer Service**
- **Basic Computer Usage**



# Course Objectives/ Essential Skills

- **Developing a Usable Resume**
- **Completing Job Applications**
- **Interviewing for Success**
- **Math “Specific”**
- **Cover Letters**



# Before Cover Letter

I wanted to thank you for interviewing me yesterday for the Customer Service Representative position.



I am confident that I have the skills needed for this position and look forward to a second interview. I am very excited about your expansion and the opportunities for growth that it would provide me.

Kristy Kingston



# After Thank You Letter

**Thank you for interviewing me for the Customer Service Representative position. My experience as a liaison to five departments will allow me to step in and actively support your departments. I'd also like to tell you a little more about my top skills:**



## **Corporate Accounts**

Dealing with up to 200 corporate accounts on a daily basis has required strong troubleshooting and liaison skills.

## **New Account Development**

Successful in implementing marketing programs and meeting revenue quotas.



## **Computerized Account Processing**

**You mentioned that processing of computerized accounts was extremely important. Using computerized systems for over 10 years I have successfully integrated dozens of new systems and conversions.**

**Again, thank you for speaking with me and I look forward to a second interview. Please contact me at (555) 555-5555 if you have any questions.**



# Criteria to Be Met Prior to Achieving A “Credential”

- **No Absences**
- **No Tardiness**
- **Must call “ if going to be late or absent” – excused absences only permitted in emergency situations at discretion of instructor**
- **Must attend job shadowing**





# Criteria to Be Met Prior to Achieving A “Credential”

- Must attend all business lectures
- Must participate in “mock” interviews
- Must sign in on a PAYROLL TIME SHEET
- Must follow any other instructions given by instructor.
- Represents “30-Day” Probationary Period



# Short -Term Training Classes Available For Tuition Reimbursement

- **Emergency Medical Technician**
- **Medical Insurance Billing**
- **Certified Nurse Assistant**
- **Medical Coding**
- **Medical Transcription**
- **Customer Service**
- **Child Development Associate**



# Short -Term Training Classes Available For Tuition Reimbursement

- General Welding
- Industrial Electricity
- Heating/Air Conditioning
- Industrial Technical Skills
- Fundamentals of Electricity & Electronics
- Beginning/Advanced Computer Aided Drafting

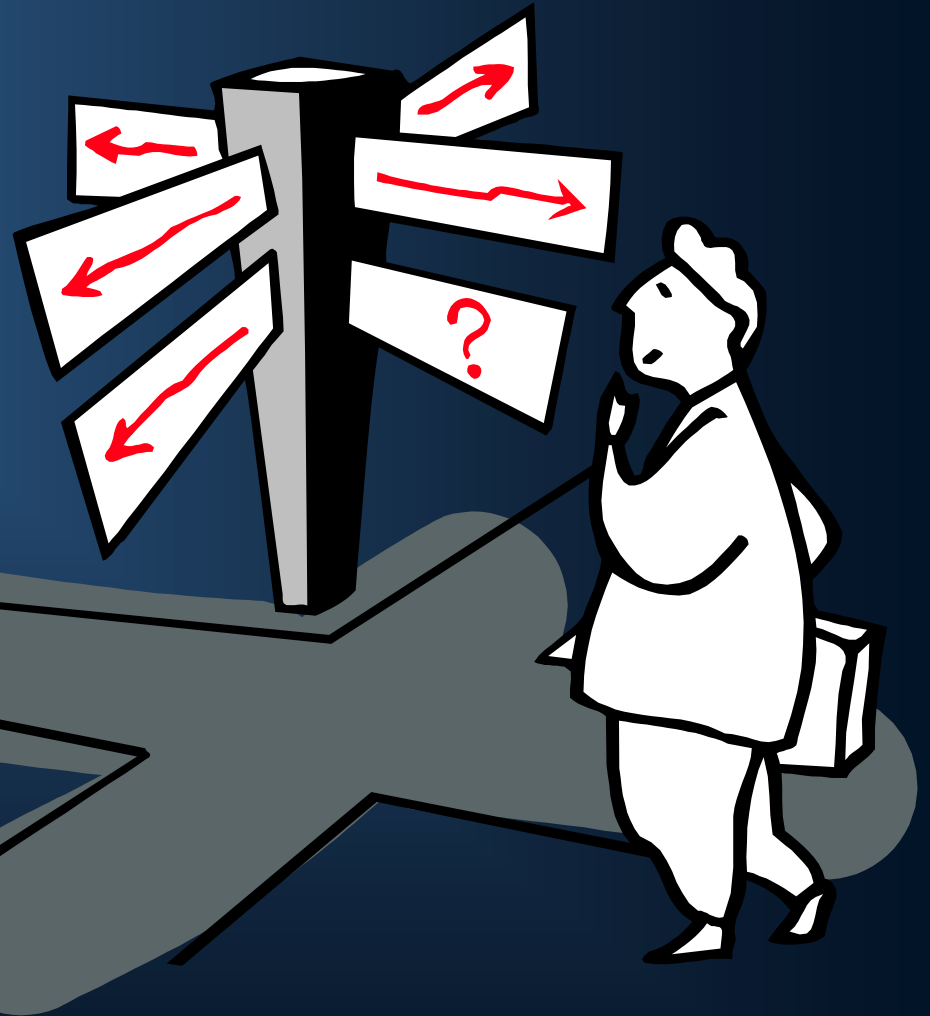


# Student Comments

- I got a job because of this class.
- I learned so much from this class.
- I don't know what else could be offered in this class. There is so much already that would be helpful in the job market.
- The course developers must have researched and organized what to present that would be most instructional and meaningful for class participants.



# Questions?





# Workforce Partnerships

- Nestle Purina Pet Care
- Lone Star Industries
- Big River Telephone Co.
- P & G Paper Products
- Newell-Rubbermaid
- Drury Hotels/Hospitality
- Ceramo
- SBC
- DANA
- Drury Reservations
- Motorcycle Stuff
- Biokyowa, Inc.



# WRC Credentialing Questions

- Utilizing a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “Very Dissatisfied” and “10” means “Very Satisfied” what is your overall satisfaction with the Workforce Readiness Credentialing Program provided from the (Career and Technology Center)?



# WRC Questions

- Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the Workplace Readiness Credentialing Program, to what extent has the program met your expectations? “1” now means “Fall short of your Expectations” and “10” means “Exceeds your Expectations.”





# WRC Questions

- Are you currently attending a training program or will you attend a training program in the future? YES or NO
- Are you currently employed? YES or NO
- What classes are you enrolled in at the present time?



# WRC Questions

- What single thing did you gain most by participating in the Workplace Readiness Credentialing Program?
- Are there any other comments or suggestions that you may have about the program?



# Follow-Up Statistics

- 206 students since January 2003
- 160/206 entered a short-term program.
- 150/206 students were available for contact.
  - 60% are working
  - 30% are still in a short-term training program



# Workplace Readiness Credential Presenters

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